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WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A Nigerian Catholic archbishop and the sultan of Sokoto said the so-called religious violence between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria is not, in fact, about religion.

The conflicts are not about the nature of God or doctrinal issues; the violence is not religious, said Archbishop John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan of Abuja. Nigerians fight over who wins or loses elections and who can and cannot get land to build a church, he said.

These "are matters between groups with special interests," he said April 22 during a meeting on Capitol Hill with members of the **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The commission**, a watchdog group, was to release a comprehensive report on violence in Nigeria May 1. Because of the violence, defined by media and others around the world as religious violence, **the commission** has listed Nigeria on a "watch list" of countries where conditions of religious freedom require close monitoring.